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# REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES, QUESTIONS RELATING TO REFUGEES, RETURNEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS AND HUMANITARIAN QUESTIONS

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## Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on the activities of her Office, 1/ as well as the report of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the High Commissioner on the work of its forty-fourth session, 2/ and taking note of the statement made by the High Commissioner on 4 November 1993, 3/

Recalling its resolution 47/105 of 16 December 1992,

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1/ See Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 12 (A/48/12).

2/ Ibid., Supplement No. 12A (A/48/12/Add.1).

3/ Ibid., Forty-eighth Session, Third Committee, 23rd meeting.

Reaffirming the purely humanitarian and non-political character of the activities of the Office of the High Commissioner, as well as the crucial importance of the High Commissioner's functions of providing international protection to refugees and seeking solutions to refugee problems,

Welcoming the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Conference on Human Rights, 4/ particularly as it reaffirms the right to seek and enjoy asylum, and the right to return to one's country,

Commending the High Commissioner and her staff for the dedicated manner in which they discharge their responsibilities, and paying special tribute to those staff members who have lost their lives in the course of their duties,

Noting with satisfaction that one hundred and twenty-three States are now parties to the 1951 Convention 5/ and/or the 1967 Protocol 6/ relating to the Status of Refugees,

Welcoming the continuing strong commitment of States to provide protection and assistance to refugees and the valuable support extended by Governments to the High Commissioner in carrying out her humanitarian tasks,

Commending those States, particularly the least developed and those hosting millions of refugees, that, despite severe economic and development challenges of their own, continue to admit large numbers of refugees into their territories, and emphasizing the need to share the burden of these States to the maximum extent possible through international assistance, including development-oriented assistance,

Noting with concern that the number of refugees and other persons to whom the Office of the High Commissioner is called upon to provide assistance and protection has continued to increase and that their protection continues to be seriously jeopardized in many situations as a result of denial of admission, unlawful expulsion, refoulement, unjustified detention, other threats to their physical security, dignity and well-being, and failure to respect and ensure their fundamental freedoms and human rights,

Recognizing that in certain regions the misuse of asylum procedures jeopardizes the institution of asylum and adversely affects the prompt and effective protection of refugees,

Emphasizing the need for States to assist the High Commissioner in seeking durable and timely solutions to the problems of refugees, as well as to take part in efforts to prevent conditions that might give rise to the flight of refugees, and to address the root causes of refugee outflows, and underlining, in this connection, State responsibility, particularly as it relates to countries of origin,

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4/ A/CONF.157/23.

5/ United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 189, No. 2545.

6/ Ibid., vol. 606, No. 8791.

Welcoming the continuing efforts of the High Commissioner to meet the protection and assistance needs of refugee women and refugee children, who constitute the majority of the world's refugee population and who are often exposed to serious threats to their safety and well-being,

Recognizing the increased demands faced by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees world wide and the need for all available resources to be fully and effectively mobilized to meet these demands,

1. Strongly reaffirms the fundamental importance of the High Commissioner's function of providing international protection to refugees and the need for States to cooperate fully with her Office in order to facilitate the effective exercise of this function;

2. Calls upon all States that have not yet done so, including Governments of newly independent States, to accede to or to declare succession to and to implement fully the 1951 Convention 5/ and the 1967 Protocol 6/ relating to the Status of Refugees and relevant regional instruments for the protection of refugees;

3. Also calls upon all States to uphold asylum as an indispensable instrument for the international protection of refugees, and to respect scrupulously the fundamental principle of non-refoulement;

4. Urges States to ensure access, consistent with relevant international and regional instruments, for all asylum-seekers to fair and efficient procedures for the determination of refugee status and the granting of asylum;

5. Expresses deep concern regarding serious threats to the security of the well-being of refugees, including incidents of refoulement, unlawful expulsion, physical attacks and detention under unacceptable conditions, and calls upon States to take all measures necessary to ensure respect for the principles of refugee protection as well as the humane treatment of asylum-seekers in accordance with internationally recognized human rights norms;

6. Endorses, in this connection, the conclusions on the personal security of refugees and on refugee protection and sexual violence adopted by the Executive Committee of the Programme of the High Commissioner at its forty-fourth session; 2/

7. Welcomes the High Commissioner's policy on refugee children and activities undertaken to ensure its implementation, aimed at ensuring that the specific needs of refugee children, including in particular unaccompanied minors, are fully met within the overall protection and assistance activities of the Office, in cooperation with Governments and other relevant organizations;

8. Acknowledges with appreciation the further progress made in the implementation of measures within the framework of the High Commissioner's programme to ensure the protection and to meet the assistance needs of refugee women and girls, in accordance with the High Commissioner's policy on refugee women;

9. Stresses the importance of international solidarity and burden-sharing in reinforcing the international protection of refugees, and urges all States, as well as non-governmental organizations, in conjunction with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, to cooperate in efforts to lighten the burden borne by States that have received large numbers of asylum-seekers and refugees;

10. Urges all States and relevant organizations to support the High Commissioner's search for durable solutions to refugee problems, including voluntary repatriation, integration in the country of asylum and resettlement in a third country, as appropriate, and welcomes in particular the ongoing efforts of her Office to pursue wherever possible opportunities to promote conditions conducive to the preferred solution of voluntary repatriation;

11. Encourages the High Commissioner, on the basis of her broad humanitarian experience and expertise, to continue to explore and to undertake protection and assistance activities aimed at preventing conditions that give rise to refugee outflows, bearing in mind fundamental protection principles, in close coordination with the Governments concerned, and within an inter-agency, intergovernmental and non-governmental framework, as appropriate;

12. Reaffirms its support for the High Commissioner's efforts, on the basis of specific requests from the Secretary-General or the competent principal organs of the United Nations and with the consent of the concerned State, and taking into account the complementarities of the mandates and expertise of other relevant organizations, to provide humanitarian assistance and protection to persons displaced within their own country in specific situations calling for the Office's particular expertise, especially where such efforts could contribute to the prevention or solution of refugee problems;

13. Recognizes the need for the international community to explore methods and means better to address within the United Nations system the protection and assistance needs of internally displaced persons, and calls upon the High Commissioner to engage actively in further consultations on this priority issue with the Department of Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons, and with other appropriate international organizations and bodies, including the International Committee of the Red Cross;

14. Also recognizes the value of addressing prevention, protection and solutions on a comprehensive regional basis and encourages the High Commissioner to consult with States, other relevant United Nations bodies and governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, concerning possibilities for additional measures and initiatives in areas affected by complex humanitarian problems involving coerced population movements;

15. Reaffirms the importance of promoting and disseminating refugee law and principles for the protection of refugees as well as of facilitating the prevention of and solutions to refugee problems, and encourages the High Commissioner to continue to strengthen the promotion and training activities of her Office, inter alia, through increased cooperation with bodies and organizations concerned with human rights and humanitarian law;

16. Urges States, the Office of the High Commissioner and non-governmental organizations to pursue their efforts to foster greater public understanding and acceptance of people of different backgrounds and cultures, with a view to dispelling hostile, racist or xenophobic attitudes and other forms of intolerance towards foreigners, including refugees and asylum-seekers, displaced people and persons belonging to minorities;

17. Notes the relationship between safeguarding human rights and preventing refugee problems, and reiterates its support for the High Commissioner's efforts to increase cooperation between her Office and the Commission on Human Rights, the Centre for Human Rights and other relevant international bodies and organizations;

18. Welcomes the further progress made by the High Commissioner in enhancing the capacity of her Office to respond to humanitarian emergencies and encourages her to provide full support to the coordination role of the Emergency Relief Coordinator, especially in major and complex emergencies;

19. Encourages the High Commissioner to continue to cooperate fully, including within the framework of the Inter-agency Standing Committee, with United Nations agencies, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations, in order to ensure an effective response to complex emergency situations;

20. Welcomes the establishment by the High Commissioner of the Partnership in Action Process in conjunction with the International Council of Voluntary Agencies as a means of strengthening and improving collaboration between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and non-governmental organizations in meeting greatly increased demands, expresses its support for the process of consultations through regional preparatory meetings as well as for the global conference in Oslo in June 1994 and invites Governments to provide financial support to this important initiative;

21. Expresses deep concern at conditions in a number of countries and regions that seriously endanger the delivery of humanitarian assistance and the security of the staff of the High Commissioner and other relief workers, deplores the recent loss of lives among personnel involved in humanitarian operations, urges support for initiatives taken by the High Commissioner and within the General Assembly and the Security Council concerning the safety of United Nations and associated personnel, in particular the consideration of new measures to enhance the safety of such personnel, and calls upon States and all parties to conflicts to take all necessary measures to ensure safe and timely access for humanitarian assistance and the security of international and local staff undertaking humanitarian work in the countries concerned;

22. Calls upon all Governments and other donors to contribute to the programmes of the High Commissioner and, taking into account the need to achieve greater burden-sharing among donors, to assist the High Commissioner in securing additional and timely income from traditional governmental sources, other Governments and the private sector in order to ensure that the needs of refugees, returnees and displaced persons of concern to the Office of the High Commissioner are met.

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